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Senator Ed Charbonneau awarded fellowship for Midwestern leadership institute

(Lombard, Ill.) May 3, 2008 -- State Senator Ed Charbonneau of Valparaiso was among 37 select lawmakers chosen today to participate in a training program that annually identifies and assists promising state leaders in the Midwest.

Senator Charbonneau will meet with fellow lawmakers from Indiana and 10 other Midwestern states and the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan on August 8-12, in Madison, Wis., for The Council of State Governments' 14th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD).

"The Bowhay Institute is one of the premier leadership training programs in the nation," says Iowa Rep. J. Scott Raecker, who serves as co-chair of the institute's steering committee. "The legislatures in the region have benefited greatly from the skills their members have gained through this unique educational experience. Many of the graduates now hold leadership positions in their states."

Since 1995, more than 440 of the region's lawmakers have graduated from the Bowhay Institute. State legislators from Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin are chosen to participate through a competitive, nonpartisan selection process. Members of the Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan legislative assemblies are selected by their caucuses to take part in the program.

BILLD was founded in 1995 to help new legislators meet the demands of program devolution and, in many states, term limits. These two emerging forces highlight the shortage of training available for legislators, a void that BILLD aims to fill.

A program of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office, BILLD is held at the University of Wisconsin's Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs. Courses and seminars are conducted by La Follette faculty, Midwestern legislative leaders and professional development experts. In addition to courses designed to develop leadership skills, the program analyzes a variety of public policy issues, including education, energy and corrections.

The program is funded through grants from foundation and corporate sponsors and an in-kind contribution provided by The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office.

The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development is named in honor of the late James Bowhay, longtime director of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Office. Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments has national headquarters in Lexington, Ky., and regional offices in Atlanta, Chicago (Lombard, Ill.), New York City and Sacramento. The goal of the national, nonpartisan organization is to assist and advance state government by providing research assistance, professional development opportunities, interstate consulting services and suggested state legislation.